



The City of Fairfax Parks and Recreation Department would like to remind all of our park patrons of the proper guidelines for staying safe during lighting disturbances. All organizations that are permitted should follow their specific safety guidelines which incorporate the department recommended guidelines.

However, the following is a default guideline if you, your family or your organization does not have safety guidelines in place.

If you have any questions about safety in our parks, please call 703.385.7858 or email parksrec@fairfaxva.gov.

Our goal is to keep you safe so you can have an ***“AMAZING EXPERIENCE!”***

LIGHTNING DISTURBANCE POLICY

1. It is strongly recommended that all park patrons wait at least 30 minutes after all lightning and thunder activity has stopped before resuming scholastic athletics activity.
2. Avoid using the restroom sinks and toilet facilities for safe shelter.
3. Stay away from the tallest trees or lone objects (such as light poles or flagpoles), metal objects (such as metal fences or metal benches/bleachers), individual trees, standing pools of water, and open fields.
4. Avoid being the highest object in a field, and **do not** take shelter under a single, tall tree.
5. Pay much more attention to the lightning threat than to the rain. Lightning can strike far from the rain shaft.
6. If there is no safe shelter within a reasonable distance away, crouch in a thick grove of small trees surrounded by taller trees, or in a dry ditch. Assume a crouched position on the ground with only the balls of your feet touching the ground, wrap your arms around your knees and lower your head. Minimize your body's surface area, and minimize contact with the ground. **Do not lie flat!**
7. If a person feels his or her hair stand on end, or their skin tingle, immediately crouch, as described in item 6.
8. Do not use the telephone, except in emergency situations.



Parks & Recreation

9. Lightning strike victims **do not** carry an electrical charge. Therefore, cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) is safe for the responder. Lightning strike victims who show signs of cardiac or respiratory arrest need prompt emergency help. Prolonged and aggressive CPR is highly effective for the survival of many victims of lightning strike.
10. **ALL** spectators, competitors, and personnel should go inside the nearest building as quickly as possible. A vehicle with a metal roof (not a convertible) and the windows rolled up is a safe alternative to a sturdy building.
11. **DO NOT** take shelter under gazebos, pavilions, trees or other tall, lone objects.
12. **DO NOT** remain on, under, or near metal benches/bleachers or metal fences.
13. Lastly, any individual who feels he or she is in danger of any lightning activity should have the right to leave the field or event site to seek safe shelter.

Guidelines on Handling Contests During Lightning Disturbances

The purpose of these guidelines is to provide a default policy to those responsible for making decisions concerning the suspension and restarting of contests, events or practices based on the presence of lightning.

Proactive Planning

1. Assign staff to monitor local weather conditions before and during events.
2. Develop an evacuation plan, including identification of appropriate nearby shelters.
3. Inform all participants, coaches, users and spectators of the safety policy.
4. Develop criteria for suspension and resumption of play;
 - a. When thunder is heard, or a cloud-to-ground lightning bolt is seen, the thunderstorm is close enough to strike your location with lightning. Suspend play and take shelter immediately.
 - b. (30) Thirty Minute Rule. Once play has been suspended, wait at least 30 minutes after the last thunder is heard or flash of lightning is witnessed prior to resuming play.
 - c. Any subsequent thunder or lightning after the beginning of the 30 minute count, resets the clock and another 30 minute count should begin.
5. Hold periodic reviews for appropriate staff or volunteers.